



West Valley City **POLICE**



A Nationally Accredited Law Enforcement Agency

Office of Chief Lee W. Russo

3575 South Market Street, West Valley City, Utah, 84119

Dangerous “Swatting” Prank Pulled on Elderly WVC Woman

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Just before midnight on June 26, 2017, police dispatch received a call from a male claiming that he had killed his parents and was armed with a gun. The caller identified himself by a name that is connected to the address where the caller claimed the crime occurred. The phone number from which the call originated also appeared to be the same phone number associated with the address of the supposed crime. Officers responded to the home on Bluebird Street and attempted to make contact with anyone inside the home, but received no response. The West Valley City SWAT team was dispatched to the scene.

Police supervisors on scene worked rapidly to gather information about the residents of the home and began to establish inconsistencies surrounding the caller's statement. Unified Police Department also worked to help establish information and verify its accuracy. Through the combination of these efforts, evidence began to emerge that the call was potentially a prank.

“This allowed officers the opportunity to de-escalate the situation. Rather than forcibly enter the home based on the information we had, we were able to back away, calm things down and safely make contact with the woman who resides in the home,” explained West Valley City Police Chief Lee Russo.

The elderly woman at the home had not heard our initial attempts to contact her.

“This could have ended a lot differently. We had a call from someone saying that he shot the people inside of this home and that he was armed and prepared to engage with police. This is a very

dangerous situation that we were responding to and it could have ended much differently than it did,” explained Chief Russo.

An investigation into the source of the call is now underway.

“We are aggressively investigating the origin of this call. We will work with all of our resources in this state, as well as our federal partners to identify the source of this call,” said Chief Russo.

The incident prompted a significant response from West Valley City Police and also required the assistance of the Unified Police Department. Chief Russo noted that during the time of the call, he monitored the dispatch screen and saw a number of calls holding, including domestic violence calls which could not be immediately addressed as a result of officers addressing the false report call.

Anyone with information regarding this incident is encouraged to contact West Valley City Police at 801-840-4000. Tips can be made anonymously.

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